

Fight or Flight ...

...it's a choice we will make thousands of times in the course of our lives. We will either painfully fight against our struggles or let ourselves ascend into a deep peace within our souls.

I was trained as an illustrator at Kendall College of Art & Design where my two favorite classes were Non-Objective Painting and Photo-realistic Rendering. The first class allowed me to free myself emotionally, and the other taught me to focus while giving me the knowledge that I could do anything if I set my mind to it and worked hard enough. I reached a catharsis when my Non-objective Painting professor, Robert Divita, made me paint over a gorgeous painting (to my mind and those of my classmates) because "it looked like people dancing through an African landscape", and the point of the class was not to include objects in your paintings.

I begged him to let me buy another canvas so that I could save the initial painting, but he wouldn't have it. I was extremely frustrated, but decided to make the best (or worst) of it and do as he asked. Once I started to paint over the original work and realized that it was lost, I painted with complete abandon. I painted furiously, applying massive texture with no regard for how much paint I used or what I was doing. There was no limit to use of color and tools with which to apply the material.

At the end of this painting frenzy, I thought the work had no merit because I longed to get back the original painting underneath. I trashed the painting, which my mother retrieved, framed and hung on her living room wall for as long as she lived.

Twenty-nine years later, after living in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma (where I painted murals in many different places), I came back home to Michigan in part to care for my ailing mother. Then one day, I took a long look at this "disastrous" painting in my mother's living room, and discovered a window into the complexities and beauty of my own soul...my young soul. This painting spoke to the very core of me. Thus began my journey to find my inner self again and release it on canvas...finally, it is my time to "fly"!

I chose to include photo-realistic flying creatures to represent my flight back into my inner soul. I allow my emotions to guide me through painting the backgrounds where the peaceful part of my soul flows out onto the canvas.

Each painting in the "Fight or Flight" series has motion that takes you up and out through the top of the work, away from your life struggles. Upward flying creatures that are thought to carry human souls to heaven in many cultures, also take you up and out, but then back into your inner soul as well.

My hope is that you, as the viewer of my work, can find the way to escape from your life struggles and return to a peaceful place in your inner soul. Be free!

Thank you for your interest in my work!
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